



**Perry Diaz**

# *PerryScope*

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## *Hail to American Caesar!*

**SACRAMENTO, CALIF., Jan. 21 (PinoyGlobal) -** Taking over the reign of power of the greatest country on Earth at a time of economic implosion and seemingly endless wars in Iraq and Afghanistan could be too much to bear for any man in this day and age. But that's what Barack Obama did at noon on January 20, 2009, when he took his oath as the 44th President -- and the first President of African descent -- of the United States of America. And to signify the symbolic meaning of his meteoric rise to lead the nation, he took the oath of office using the same Bible used by Abraham Lincoln in 1861.

While Lincoln would have presided over the reconstruction of a reunited country devastated by a bloody civil war, President Obama is going to preside over a disunited people shattered by an economic crisis of catastrophic proportion.

While Lincoln issued the "Emancipation Proclamation" during the Civil War to free the African slaves from human bondage, President Obama wants to emancipate America's middle class besieged from financial bondage.

Although the Civil War ended in 1865 ending slavery in the nation, it took another 100 years before the African-Americans gained political empowerment

with the passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965. And it took another 44 years before an African-American ascended to the pinnacle of power of the most powerful nation on Earth.

The historic -- and spectacular -- election of President Obama last November 4, 2008, has the widest margin for a non-incumbent presidential candidate, more than 9 million votes over John McCain. It was the desire for change that eventually convinced the American voters to elect President Obama who's message, "Change we can believe in," resonated with the people.

And "change" did President Obama start to make. By the time he named the members of Team Obama, 80% of Americans approved of what he was doing. Clearly, President Obama -- the son of a Kenyan father and a Caucasian American mother -- was on the right track. And if he stays on course, the American people will stay with him all the way. But it's not going to be a piece of cake. The road to recovery is going to be difficult to travel.

To begin with, President Obama's number one priority is to jump-start the moribund economy. He and his economic team are putting together the "American Recovery and Reinvestment Plan" -- estimated at \$800 billion -- which will put millions of Americans

to work. "We need an American Recovery and Reinvestment Plan that not only creates jobs in the short-term but spurs economic growth and competitiveness in the long-term," he said.

Then he has to grapple with the political realities of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan which is draining the U.S. treasury \$10 billion a month. He is aware that these wars cannot be won militarily. He knows the lessons America learned from the Vietnam War and the lessons Russia learned from its invasion of Afghanistan.

Then he has to deal with the age-old conflict between Israel and the Palestinians. Can peace be achieved during his presidency? The crux of the matter is: Can there be peace without a resolution to the question of the Palestinian refugees' "right of return," who were driven out by the Israelis in 1948 and are now living in squalid camps in Lebanon? The issue is complicated when Israel said it will never allow the Palestinian refugees to return to Israel and Hamas said that there will be no peace unless all of Israel is returned to the Palestinians.

In addition, how is President Obama going to deal with Iran who is hell-bent in developing its nuclear weapons which she will use against Israel in the event that its puppets -- Hamas and Hezbollah -- are unable to annihilate Israel by conventional means.

How is he going to deal with a re-emerging superpower Russia who wants to regain its economic hegemony over the former republics of the defunct Soviet Union? Can he trust Vladimir Putin?

How about the soon-to-be superpower China, the most populous country on Earth that is hungry for oil and other natural resources she doesn't have. Are we seeing the revival of the concept of "Greater East Asia Co-Prosperty Sphere" which would be led by China this time

around? The oil and natural gas-rich Spratly archipelago in the South China Sea is claimed by China as part of its continental shelf. What would prevent her from claiming the entire South China Sea? With dwindling supply of crude oil, it is anticipated that this could be the next major trouble spot which would pit China against the United States.

Indeed, President Obama is faced with gargantuan problems. However, they're not insurmountable. It would take a great leader with a grand vision and diplomatic skills to solve these problems. But like Emperor Septimius Severus of Rome 1,900 years ago, President Obama could bring stability to America and peace in the Middle East during his presidency.

Septimius Severus was born in Leptis Magna in what is now Libya in 145 AD. Like President Obama, he was of mixed race -- Libyan father and mother of Italian descent. In 193 AD, when Emperor Commodus' assassination was followed by the murder of his successor, Pertinax, who only reigned for three months, a civil war erupted between Generals Septimius Severus and Pescennius Niger when both of them were declared emperor by their legions. Septimius Severus won and he became the first African Roman emperor.

He was credited for restoring stability in the empire. Rome was then at war with Parthia, which included Mesopotamia (Iraq). In 197 AD, he won and annexed the conquered lands -- including Mesopotamia -- to the Roman empire; thus, increasing Rome's military and financial burdens. But he was able to meet these responsibilities and Rome prospered. He died peacefully in Britain in 211 AD.

Indeed, President Obama could learn from the reign of Septimius Severus and restore stability in the U.S. and turn its economy around. If President Obama succeeds, he could become the modern-day American Caesar. Hail Caesar! #